

Appendix E: Strategies to Link Central and West Maui

TASK FORCE REPORT

STRATEGIES TO LINK CENTRAL AND WEST MAUI

FEBRUARY 2000

Prepared in collaboration with:
Central and West Maui Connector Task Force,
A Citizens Advisory Group

In cooperation with:
County of Maui Department of Public Works & Waste Management
U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration
State of Hawaii Department of Transportation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Central and West portions of Maui are linked primarily by a solitary, two-lane principal arterial, Honoapiilani Highway (Route 30). For this reason, incidences along this route, including road closures, have resulted in serious delays and disruptions to the traffic flow. The problem has intensified with the increasing frequency and duration of the road closures.

In an effort to seek some sort of solution or mitigation of the problem, State Senator Jan Yagi-Buen has convened a task force of public and private sector representatives to investigate the situation, and to recommend any possible remedies. Staff from the Federal Highway Administration, Maui County Department of Public Works and Waste Water Management, and the State Department of Transportation were tasked with providing technical support and guidance.

This report documents the information and recommendations developed through that effort.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Honoapiilani Highway in West Maui is a heavily traveled route, with traffic volumes projected to increase as the area develops. Traffic accidents, high ocean surges crossing the roadway, fire and smoke hazards along the route, etc., have resulted in disruptions to the traffic flow and/or complete road closures for as long as two days. Aside from the traffic congestion, residents and tourists have been isolated from the other parts of the island, triggering a variety of socio-economic impacts.

The primary mission of the Task Force was to look at permanent solutions (i.e., alternate routes) to this recurring problem, but in the course of its meetings, the group also identified other problems which could be addressed with more immediate, temporary measures. This included the lack of public notification of road closures; poor conditions of alternate emergency routes, i.e., cane haul roads, and northern route via Kahakuloa; and possible inefficient use of the emergency routes, e.g., inadequate accesses. These are included in this report for completeness.

IDENTIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The following alternative solutions were identified:

Long Term

1. Addition of two lanes to the Honoapiilani Highway Corridor from Maalaea Road to Puamana.
2. Implementation of an expanded bus transit and/or ferry system.

Short Term

1. Improvements to the cane haul roads for emergency use.
 - a. Spot improvements to fill potholes, improve accesses, provide minimal signage.
 - b. Coning to improve two directional operations.
2. Improvements to the northern route via Kahakuloa for emergency use. Spot improvements along the route.
3. Provision of programmable message signs along major routes accessing West Maui.
4. Service patrol to expedite restoring the roadways to normal operations and to assist in emergency operations.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Various alternatives were identified by the Task Force. Improvements to the different portions of the West Maui routes would solve different problems and could be pursued concurrently.

All alternatives would require funding. To qualify for Federal participation, improvements must meet current standards, and be developed in accordance with applicable regulations and compliance requirements. The lower cost, spot improvements along the emergency routes would not bring the roads up to standard, and must therefore be funded locally.

Major improvements such as the addition of lanes to the Honoapiilani Highway corridor would require a feasibility study, whereby environmental impacts and other issues would be identified. This would be the first step in the project development process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force's recommendations are as follows:

1. A feasibility study for Honoapiilani Highway, Maalaea Road to Puamana, should be initiated as soon as possible.
2. Minimal, spot improvements should be provided for the cane haul roads to improve their use as emergency alternate routes. Also, coning during emergency operations should be implemented.
3. Minimal, spot improvements along the northern route should be continued.
4. Programmable signs should be installed on the major roads leading to Honoapiilani Highway to notify motorists of road closures.
5. Service patrol to expedite restoring the roadways to normal operations and to assist in emergency operations.